

ANDREWS UNIVERSITY SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Dissertation Abstract

A MISSIOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE PHENOMENON OF DUAL ALLEGIANCE IN THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST CHURCH AMONG THE YORUBA PEOPLE OF NIGERIA

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Problem

Many Africans and members of other traditional societies of the world who still hold to a supernaturalistic and spiritualistic worldview visit diviners, shamans, spiritualistic herbalists, and the traditional medicine men and women who use enchantments, divination, charms, invocation of the spirit world, etc. They engage in such practices for various reasons which include, to diagnose and treat various ailments, both physical and psychological which plague their clients, a quest to know the future through divination, and also for the preparation of different kinds of charms and medicines. Christians, including some Yoruba Adventists, also engage in such consultations, a practice which is categorically condemned in the Scriptures, the normative source for the Christian faith and life.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research was, first, to study the causes, forms, meanings, and ramifications of dual allegiance among Yoruba Seventh-day Adventists, and, second, to propose an Adventist response to dual allegiance among Yoruba Seventh-day Adventists.

Method

I used a basic or generic qualitative research approach to gather data for subsequent analysis and study. Data collection was done among Yoruba Seventh-day Adventists in Nigeria. Participants were interviewed regarding worldview, culture, causes for the calamities of life, solutions for the problem of life, their ethno-history, encounters with Christianity, and other experiences that generated a rich data supply for the study.

Results

The research showed that dual allegiance exists among the Yoruba Seventh-Adventists and it appears in different forms; it was caused by the discrepancies in the cultural and worldview specificities between the Christian missionaries and those of the Yoruba recipients; the lack of contextualization of the gospel to the Yoruba milieu; slavery in the history of the Yoruba, especially due to the participation in it by some Christian missionaries and bishops; failures in the three essential Christian encounters of allegiance, truth, and power; people movement; and the role of *Ifa*, the Yoruba deity of wisdom and divination in the missionary expeditions among the *Egba*, a sub-tribe in the nineteenth century.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Dual allegiance is a significant issue in the Seventh-day Adventist Church that needs a concerted effort to both detect and eliminate from within the believers. Critical contextualization is the process that will address the problem. A major emphasis is needed on the power of the gospel. Pastors and lay leaders of the church need to be trained in critical contextualization. The creation of a study center for African Traditional Religions and worldviews will help the denomination to better understand how to contextualize mission to Africans and other people groups with similar worldviews.